Criteria and Instructions to States
2011 Western Wildland Urban Interface Grant Program

Congress has provided increased funding assistance to states through the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry programs since 2001. The focus of much of this additional funding was mitigating risk in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas. In the West, the State Fire Assistance (SFA) funding is available and awarded through a competitive process with emphasis on hazard fuel reduction, information and education, and community and homeowner action. This portion of the National Fire Plan was developed to assist interface communities manage the unique hazards they find around them. Long-term solutions to interface challenges require informing and educating people who live in these areas about what they and their local organizations can do to mitigate these hazards.

The 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy focuses on assisting people and communities in the WUI to moderate the threat of catastrophic fire through the four National Fire Plan goals of improving prevention and suppression, reducing hazardous fuels, restoring fire-adapted ecosystems, and promoting community assistance.

Grant Criteria:
1) Reduce Hazardous Fuels / Restore Fire-adapted Ecosystems:

Recipients may facilitate and implement mitigating fuel treatments in or adjacent to identified fire prone communities to reduce the threat of wildfire to communities. Fuel reduction projects and vegetation treatments have been identified as a means of mitigating wildfire hazards. These are projects that remove or modify fuels in and/or adjacent to WUI development. Effective fuels mitigation treatments can be implemented across jurisdictional boundaries, on adjoining private lands, or within the respective communities. Projects of this type include fuel breaks, thinning, pruning, landscape modifications, etc. The overall purpose is to modify or break up the fuels in such a way as to lessen catastrophic fire and its threat to public and firefighter safety and damage to property. Another way to prevent future large, catastrophic wildfires from threatening communities is by carrying out appropriate treatments (such as prescribed burning or thinning) to restore and rehabilitate forest and grassland health in and adjacent to the WUI. Such treatments have reduced the severity of wildfires, and may have additional desirable outcomes, such as providing sustainable environmental, social and economic benefits. Project proposals should consider all elements required to implement treatments on the ground, which includes acquiring the necessary permits and consultations needed to complete plans and assessments.

Examples of projects that qualify (not all inclusive):
➢ Defensible space around homes and structures
➢ Shaded fuel breaks
➢ Fuels reduction beyond defensible space
➢ Removal of slash including piling and burning; mulching; grinding; etc.
➢ Prescribed fire
➢ Thinning
➢ Maintenance of **non-federally funded** fuels projects (explain in application narrative)

2) Improve Prevention/Education in the Interface:

Recipients can provide leadership to coordinate, develop, and distribute wildland urban interface education programs in association with insurance companies, communities, local government agencies, and other partners. Informational and educational projects must target mitigation of risk and prevention of loss. Projects should lead to the use or establishment of one or more fire program elements such as fire safety codes, implementation of Firewise safety practices, establishing local fire safe councils, fuels treatments within fire prone communities, or community planning to define fire safe actions suited to the local ecosystem.

Examples of projects that qualify (not all inclusive):
  - ➢ Firewise or similar programs
  - ➢ Living with Fire newspaper inserts
  - ➢ Fire education components to Project Learning Tree
  - ➢ Pamphlets, brochures, handouts

3) Planning:

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP's) are created by local communities and may address issues such as wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, structure protection, or a combination of the above. The process of developing these plans can help a community clarify and refine its priorities for the protection of life, property, and critical infrastructure in the wildland-urban interface. The Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) minimum requirements for a CWPP are: 1) Collaboration (must be developed with community members, local and state government representatives in collaboration with federal agencies and other interested stakeholders**),** 2) Prioritized Fuel Reduction (plan must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment), and 3) Treatment of Structural Ignitability (must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed in the plan). A copy of the CWPP Handbook can be found at http://www.safnet.org/policyandpress/cwpphandbook.pdf

Examples of projects that qualify (not all inclusive):
  - ➢ Creation of CWPP/or equivalent document
  - ➢ Priority projects listed in existing CWPPs covering the above criteria

4) Examples of Projects that DO NOT Qualify (not all inclusive):
  - ➢ **Maintenance on previous federally funded fuels projects**
  - ➢ Preparedness and suppression capacity building; such as purchase of fire department equipment (try VFA, RFA, DHS and FEMA grant programs)
  - ➢ Small business start-up funding
  - ➢ Research and development projects (try Economic Action Program)
  - ➢ GIS and database systems

➢ Construction/Infrastructure (building remodel, bridges, road construction, water development)

Grant Considerations:

➢ Meets the grant criteria above- if it does not, the application will be considered ineligible

➢ Meets the 50/50 match requirement*- if not, the application will be considered ineligible

➢ Each grant request will be limited to a maximum of $300,000.

➢ No state will receive more than 15% of the funds available in the west.

➢ All grants will be scored based on the following (highest possible score is 11):

• Is this project achievable? (time, goals, accurate budget, etc.)

Yes clearly = 2 Yes but needs more info/inaccurate budget/etc. = 1 No = 0

• Is this project measurable? (# of acres treated, # of education/outreach programs, etc.)

Clearly defined outputs = 2 Mentioned but not clear #'s/measurable = 1 Not measurable = 0

• Is the applicant clearly showing collaborative elements and partners? (confidence level)

Collaborators input is clearly defined = 2 Collaborators listed but roles not defined = 1 Not there = 0

• Is this a landscape scale project?

Yes = 1 No = 0

• Is this project implemented from an existing community plan or is the request to develop the plan and begin treatments? (Note: preference is given to those projects that are incorporated in a completed plan)

Plan completed/this funding will complete plan and implement project = 2 Plan in progress = 1 No plan = 0

• Is the applicant clearly demonstrating project longevity? (Note: preference will be given to those projects clearly showing how it will remain effective over time)

Clearly defined = 2 Mentioned but not defined = 1 None = 0

*A 50/50 match. The allocated grant amount must be matched in full by the recipient using a **non-federal source**. Exception: Title III funds under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, PL 106-393 are not considered federal dollars and may be used as match. The matching share can be soft match (which includes training hours valued at an accepted rate, donated labor/equipment, etc) and/or hard match (which is actual dollars spent other than federal grant funds within the specified scope of work.) If the project is part of the consolidated payment grant, matching funds can be combined or met from any one or all program areas.

Application Instructions:

The application is in adobe pdf format. It is fill in enabled in any form of Adobe Reader 5.0 or higher. If you do not have Adobe Reader, go to http://get.adobe.com/reader/ and download Reader 9.1.

1) All blocks are fill-in enabled and character locked. Applicants must fit all information into the allotted box space. Hold your mouse arrow over each block for further instructions. **Applications that have been modified for any reason will be considered ineligible by the review committee. Any attachments or additional documents that are not removed at the state level will not be considered by the review committee.**

2) **Applications must be submitted through the appropriate state agency (typically the State Forester). State agencies must fill in the provided summary sheet and submit with the applications for committee review.**

3) Application guidelines by box number: (All boxes must be filled in on the application. If a box does not apply to your project fill in that space with NA.)

➢ *Box 1 & 2-* Basic applicant and community at risk information.

➢ *Box 3 & 4-* The totals in these boxes will add automatically when all data is entered into the fields. It is recommended you check all numbers add up correctly. See description of hard vs. soft match.

➢ *Box 5-* Answer the specific questions. Under the three Project Category fields fill in only if they apply to your project. If, for example, Planning is not a part of your project fill in NA.

➢ *Box 6-* The project area description should give an overview of the project to point out the hazards and clearly show the need for work in this area. If applying for a fuels reduction project, describe the vegetation types.

➢ *Box 7-* The scope of work should explain exactly how the grant dollars will be spent on this project. Unlike the overview, this will provide the specific details of the project using measurable units where applicable. Be concise, say exactly what will be done with grant funds not what you expect the reviewer wants to hear. Use this block to explain any additional budget detail.

➢ *Box 8-* Describe the contributions each partner will make to the project by stating the collaborating partners name and what they will be contributing to the project such as manpower, equipment, matching funds, etc. The questions for does this community have a plan and is this part of the plan are drop boxes so click in the field, scroll up and down arrows will appear. Scroll up or down until you find the answer you are looking for.

➢ **Box 9-** Describe the landscape this project influences. Show how the project has or will have impact outside the immediate project area. For example, a project in a community may abut and compliment a Forest Service project on their land where they are creating a fuel break around your community defensible space project. Give specifics on how this project will tie into the larger picture of community protection. For information/education and or planning projects explain how your project compliments or enhances those by other agencies and/or ties into a greater goal. Explain the who, what, when, where, why, and how of its anticipated impacts.

> ➢ **Box 10-** The **Project Timeline** should include such things as: begin/end dates, milestones, quarterly accomplishments, etc.

Maintenance should clearly describe the who, what, when, where and why of how this project will remain effective and be sustained over time. The four main points to be included for fuels projects are:

1) Environmental Factors: describe the maintenance requirements unique to this project based on site characteristics i.e., present and future vegetation occupying the site, growth rates, returned natural fire intervals or any other environmental factor that affects the continued maintenance of this project.

2) Education: describe how key players have been trained and educated to maintain the project and explain their understanding of the needs and expectations of the project's maintenance

3) Commitment: describe the commitment by the individual/community to maintain this project into the future, i.e. state laws, CWPP terms, signed landowner agreements or other documents or agreements that hold the sub-grantee accountable for project maintenance over time

4) Monitoring: describe who will be responsible for monitoring the project, what qualifications they have if they are not obvious (i.e. State Forestry personnel, Fire Safe Council member, Fire Department personnel, etc.), and at what intervals they will be checking (i.e. yearly, quarterly, etc); clearly describe timelines, milestones, and measurables

Sustainability should clearly describe how the project will be sustained over time.

Application Due Dates:

The standard *Western States WUI Application Final Revision 6/8/2010* must be used. **All applications must be received by Arlene Weber-Sword by 4:30 p.m., AKDT on August 20, 2010. Late applications will not be considered. The email address to send the applications to is**: arlene.weber-sword@alaska.gov.   **Only electronic applications will be accepted. Applicants may attach supporting documentation such as maps of project area but supporting documentation will not be forwarded on with selected prioritized applications to the Western States Grant Committee. Additional supporting documentation will be reviewed only by Alaska's in state grant committee.**